

18<sup>th</sup> January 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I would like to invite you to an information evening about a potential two week expedition to Transylvania on **17<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> July 2019** to help with biodiversity surveys run by Operation Wallacea. The presentation will be given on **31<sup>st</sup> January 2018** in the **Sixth Form Centre** and is open to current Year 11 and Year 12 pupils. While the expedition will be of primary interest to students interested in biology, ecology and conservation, any pupil is welcome to attend.

The expedition takes place in the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains within the Tarnava Mare Natura 2000 area. It is one of Europe's last medieval landscapes and is home to the continent's last remaining populations of lowland bears and wolves. The students will be helping an international team of scientists surveying in this region which is of outstanding biodiversity value because of centuries of low intensity farming methods. Working with local NGO Fundatia ADEPT, this data will be used to assess the effectiveness of maintaining the traditional farming methods in protecting his area.

Students will take part in several surveys including monitoring large mammals (using camera traps to capture sightings of bear, wild boar and deer), small mammal and herpetofauna surveys, birds surveys (using point count methods and mist-netting), butterfly surveys, bat surveys (using both detectors, observation and mist-nets) and farm surveys (recording livestock, grassland cutting, crops grown etc.). Students will also take part in a Transylvanian ecology course which will include lectures on sampling techniques, biodiversity endemic to the region and conservation strategies in Transylvania

It is also possible to use the expedition to gain extra UCAS points by doing an EPQ, and the expedition covers key aspects of the A-level Biology and Geography syllabuses. In addition if students are applying for UK universities then they automatically qualify by completing the expedition for a University Award that can be included on their UCAS form. Current Year 12 pupils who will have completed their UCAS applications by this point will have the opportunity to gain skills and experiences that will give them a competitive edge over competition for jobs, work placements and any future career in conservation as experience in the field is a requirement.

We estimate the total cost of the expedition to be £2,200, though we are hoping to reduce this price. This price includes participation in the Operation Wallacea programme, transport to and from the airport, flights, internal travel and park fees. Operation Wallacea have a professional fundraising team who can visit and help the school group raise a substantial proportion of the total sum needed.

I look forward to seeing you on the evening.

Mr A Polgrean  
Biology Teacher